LIFESTYLE / C1

'Recessionista' must-haves

NEWS / A2

MILF will keep panel in peace talks with gov't

BUSINESS / B1

OFW remittances to grow to $16.9B, says Bangko Sentral

ACROSS / A13

Abu Sayyaf kidnappers free nursing student

WORLD / A18

Christmas Day: Bethlehem festive, but Gaza violent

Hostage-taker Ducat freed after posting bail

By Tina G. Santos

ARMANDO DUCAT JR., A BUSINESSMAN and daycare center owner who pulled a dangerous publicity stunt last year when he held 26 children hostage inside a bus near Manila City Hall, walked out of detention on Christmas Eve after posting bail.

One year and nine months in jail apparently

HOSTAGE-TAKER A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Friday, December 26, 2008 • Vol. 24 / No. 18 • website: www.inquirer.net

Overworked in HK? Try mall's sleep pods

HONG KONG—WHEN the going gets tough, take a nap.

As Hong Kong's already frantic workers cling to their jobs amid the global economic downturn, the hectic

OVERWORKED A4

MOUNTAIN RETREAT A New People's Army guerrilla keeps watch at a rebel camp in the hinterlands of Mountain Province.

Pope warns greed will destroy world

Addresses gloomy economic conditions

VATICAN CITY—POPE Benedict XVI on Thursday issued a dire warning against greed, saying in his Christmas message that the world was headed toward ruin if selfishness prevails over solidarity during tough economic times for both rich and poor nations.

Speaking from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica on the day Christians commemorate Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, Benedict declared that the "heart of the Christian message is meant for all men and women."

The traditional papal Christmas Day message "Urbi et Orbi"—Latin for "to the City and to the World"—usually covers the globe's hot spots. This year, however, Benedict also addressed the gloomy economic conditions worrying many across the planet.

Amid daily news of mass layoffs, failing companies and people losing homes they can no

POPE A6

VATICAN MASS Pope Benedict XVI blesses two children as he celebrates Midnight Mass at St. Peter's Basilica on Christmas Day.

AP

RED REVOLUTION AT 40

Sison now croons to keep cause alive

By Jocelyn R. Uy

(First of two parts)

T-TEAM Report

Fernando del Mundo, Chief

FOUNDED 40 YEARS AGO TODAY, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) is "grasping at straws," its guerrillas resorting to banned land mines, its self-exiled leader reduced to crooning patriotic songs on YouTube to stoke the flames of his revolution.

"Their activities have an extricable link to moneymaking activities," Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. says in an interview with the Inquirer. "Some of them are merely using outmoded ideologies as a cover for syndicated criminal activities."

President Macapagal-Arroyo has directed the Armed Forces of the Philippines to eliminate the insurgency by the end of her term in mid-2010.

By military accounts, the troops are on track to meet the objective in their campaign against the CPP's armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA).

"The CPP-NPA movement is still the number one threat to the security of the state as they have not given up the goal of overthrowing the government

SISON A6

SISON in a pensive mood during a meeting in Utrecht.

Rebellion against US imperialism

By Kate Pedroso

Inquirer Research

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF the Philippines (CPP) was established by trade union leader Crisanto Evangelista in November 1930. Leaders and members came mostly from workers' ranks.

The Commonwealth government legalized the party in 1937. The next year, it merged with the Socialist Party of the Philippines (SPP), which was formed in 1932.

Following the outbreak of

REBELLION A6

Fil-Am's inventions also fly high

By Juan Escandor Jr.

Inquirer Southern Luzon

NAGA, CAMARINES SUR—When the Hueys, Black Hawks and Apaches fly, Florencio Pardi-Regala flies with them—his work, that is.

Embedded in these US military helicopters—and sometimes tanks—are antennas the 70-year-old Filipino-American designed and that were approved by the US Patent and Trademark Office.

Regala's four inventions—all antenna designs that could receive and transmit signals from line-of-site (LOS) ground-based transmitters/receivers to satellite communications (Satcom)—were patented in 2006 and in 2007.

His first patented antenna design, approved on March 28, 2006, was the "Portable Co-Located LOS and Satcom Antenna."

He described the antenna as a gadget that integrated the ground-based and satellite communications so that the operator would not have to shift modes

FIL-AM'S A7

Free my pa, teener with cancer writes Somali pirates

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THIS 15-YEAR-OLD IS NOT only waging a battle against acute leukemia but also fighting for her father's freedom.

She has only one wish for this holiday season—that seaman Roger Arroyo be released by his Somali captors.

"I beg you, be my Santa Claus," Michelle Arroyo wrote in an appeal to the pirates holding her father. "Let [him] be your greatest gift to me this Christmas!"

Michelle's mother Cristy Arroyo e-mailed her letter to the Cancer Warriors Foundation, which has been helping in her medical treatment.

The letter was passed on in the Internet until someone forwarded it to the Inquirer.

"I hope my daughter's letter will touch their hearts," Cristy Arroyo said of her husband's captors when the Inquirer

FREE MY PA, A9

Pinoys who lost Taiwan jobs face life of poverty once more

ANGONO, RIZAL—AMERICANS were already defaulting on home payments when Gertrudes Cagdi mortgaged her modest farm near Manila to help send her two granddaughters to Taiwan.

There, Bernadette Cortas and her cousin Cristina de Borja worked in a factory making microchips for appliances sold to an American consumer market on the verge of collapse.

Little did the 59-year-old grandmother know that the US subprime meltdown and subsequent financial crisis would come home to roost in Angono, a lakeshore town east of Manila where she lives with a daughter and the two granddaughters in a cramped 24-square-meter home made of plywood and galvanized iron sheets.

A nearby river often overflows and floods the ground floor in the rain, and the warped furniture, bought with the granddaughters' earnings, has to be replaced every year.

"Huge debts and a splitting headache," 24-year-old Cortas

PINOYS A7

WORKERS Cristina de Borja (left) and her cousin Bernadette Cortas are back in their small apartment holding a demand letter from a moneylender.

Second FRONT PAGE

No walk in the park for GMA

Win-win CARP solution sought

MALACAÑANG AND CONGRESS SHOULD FIND A "win-win solution" to the agrarian reform unrest still hounding the countryside 20 years after the enactment of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) which promised land to the landless.

Good intentions

SC option

MILF to keep peace panel

Manapat, ex-archives chief, dies

BDO
Branch Banking
This holiday season, we're ready to serve you at more branches nationwide.
Because keeping your family's Christmas traditions is more important than money.
See or call your branch for detailed holiday schedules from December 26-31, 2008.
We find ways
MegaLink

Hostage-taker Ducat freed after posting bail

DUCAT

Posting, singing, swimming

Overworked? Try sleep pods

'Really crazy place'

Low heart disease risk

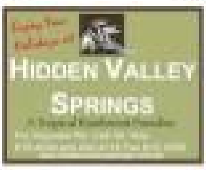
Long working hours

Gov't to borrow P92B to cover most of '09 deficit

To compete, students need English, says solon

By Leila B. Salaverria

Real estate still a safe haven for investments



Panay rebels cite gains, but military unfazed

Sison now croons to keep cause alive

English teacher launches party

'Poster figure'

Genuine movement

Army role to go on

Status of belligerency

Rebellion against US imperialism

Armed strength

Witch-hunts

Party splinters

Peace talks

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Fil-Am's inventions also fly high

From page A1

when the need arose for either system.

The other two inventions were the "Single Connector Dual-Band Antenna with Embedded Diplexer," approved on Aug. 29, 2006, and the Portable Telescoping Line-Of-Sight Array," on Sept. 5, 2006.

The first invention was an antenna installed in the belly of fixed winged and rotary aircraft used in air-to-ground communications, while the portable telescoping line-of-sight array was an antenna installed in the instruments used by foot soldiers.

REGALA

The latest invention was called "Conformal Driveshaft Cover Antenna," granted a US patent on June 19, 2007, which was installed in the horizontal boom in the tail of the helicopter.

Regala's life could be a classic example of a poor boy from the province who had achieved what he wanted through hard work.

His family of seven siblings survived on a small eatery in the public market here. Regala, however, managed to earn a degree in electronics and communications engineering from University of the East.

He migrated to California in 1969 and recalled he had to walk to his workplace to save money from a starting salary of $1.75

an hour in an assembly line.

Regala later got employed in Communications Component Corp. There, he volunteered to undertake the design of a 38-element radio frequency antenna that American technicians and engineers could not build.

Regala said it was his first opening in antenna designs which made him a name among his peers in the company.

Communications Component was later sold to Rockwell Collins Operations in 1980 where he became vice president for research and documentation. In 1985, he joined Trivec Avant Corp. where he stayed for 10 years.

In 2004, he started his own company and produced monitoring video, access card production and other electronic security products.

"We do our business at home with my son, wife and brother working together as a small enterprise and we use our garage for our laboratory and the living room for the administrative office," Regala said.

With the demand for security after 9/11, he has been doing extremely well and has been unaffected by the ups and downs in the US economy.

Pinoys . . .

From page A1

said Agence France-Presse when asked what she had earned from her stint at the ASE semiconductor factory near Taipei, which serves electronics giants such as Motorola and Epson.

Both she and De Borja, 30, now wear horn-rimmed glasses—the result of working long hours in front of tiny circuit boards.

Just eight months after the cousins got their jobs, which netted them about 20,000 Taiwan dollars (P28,000) a month after food and lodging expenses, they were shipped back home along with 133 other Filipinos as the company cut staff amid plunging global electronics demand.

Poster child

Cortes would be an apt poster child of the Philippines' economic diaspora.

Once a plump, happy teenage schoolgirl, she is now a college dropout who worked in a fast-food restaurant to put herself through high school.

The eldest of five children of an unemployed bus driver who lives with another woman, Cortes single-handedly fed, housed and put her siblings through school.

Her mother works as a maid in Saudi Arabia but has a new boyfriend and no longer sends money to the family, Cortes said.

When Cortes lost her job in Taiwan, her siblings also had to quit school.

Now jobless, penniless and deep in debt, she is staring at a bleak holiday season, unable to pay back the P50,000 loan she and De Borja had secured with their grandmother's 2,000-square-meter farm as collateral.

The loan covered only part of their "job placement fees" of P90,000 each, which was mainly paid for by commercial money lenders that charge interest rates of 3 percent a month.

Cortes did not even have money to go home to Pasacao town south of Manila for Christmas, and is temporarily staying at her grandmother's.

Her and De Borja's desperation saw them line up overnight outside a Manila television station last weekend for a game show that offered a house and P1 million in prizes.

Both missed out because "they appeared to favor domestic helpers," De Borja said.

8M OFWs

The cousins are just two of some eight million Filipinos—10 percent of the population—who have joined an economic diaspora.

The government says several hundred overseas Filipino workers have lost their jobs due to the global crisis, which, according to the International Labor Organization, could see as many as 20 million people put out of work by the end of 2009.

Cortes and De Borja have filed a suit to get a refund of part of their placement fee, which had guaranteed them contracts for two years in Taiwan.

While no one can be jailed in the Philippines for failing to pay a debt, they need to repay the loans or avoid becoming blacklisted by labor recruiters.

De Borja, a former pharmaceutical company worker in Manila, said a job in the Philippines was not appealing because of the low pay.

Two in five Filipinos live on $2 or less a day and a third of the labor force is either out of work or underemployed at any one time.

De Borja said she had pawned or sold most of her jewelry to try and pare down debts.

The Taiwan job helped tide things over before the subprime crisis blew up early this year. The cousins worked seven days a week and padded their wages with overtime.

But the factory stopped the extra shifts in June, and by September, as electronics demand plummeted, their take-home pay was down to about 3,000 Taiwan dollars (P3,000) a month.

De Borja's younger sister has since left for Dubai to work as a shopping mall clerk.

President Macapagal-Arroyo received the laid-off chip workers in Malacañang three days after they first home on Dec. 2.

But real help was apparently not forthcoming.

"It was obvious that her smile was faked. It was plastered on her mug," De Borja said.

"Plastic," Cortes agreed. AFP

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Supermarket
price buster
Now P 995
Now P 900
P 165/kg
P 110/kg
Now P 500
Now P 1,100
P 30/kg
Now P 75
Now P 659
Now P 150
Now P 300
Now P 500
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DOUBLE
double points
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Jan. 31, '09
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Holiday Hours
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Lucena
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Pope warns greed will destroy world

Message to Africa

Mideast violence

Midnight Mass

Thoughts on Holy Land

Untoward incident

Free my pa, teen writes to pirates

Chief cook

Prayers

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Betrayed

IT MAY HAVE BEEN A JOKE, PERHAPS IT WAS meant to be nothing more than a clever cocktail-circuit quip, but former President Corazon Aquino's apology to the disgraced former President Joseph Estrada for the "mistake" of Edsa 2001 is a betrayal of the highest aspirations of the democracy she helped restore in 1986, and which she remains the famous icon of.

EDITORIAL

Don't replace Santa with St. Nicholas

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

Cheesecake and the almost Weberian clerk

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

Iran encounters Obama

WORLD VIEW

Karim Sadjadpour

1968

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Hope and gratitude

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

The incunabula

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

MGG link sought

LETTERS

[illegible]

Have a truly happy, healthy and humane holiday

[illegible]

Why pay abusive OFW boss?

[illegible]

JDV in a positive light

[illegible]

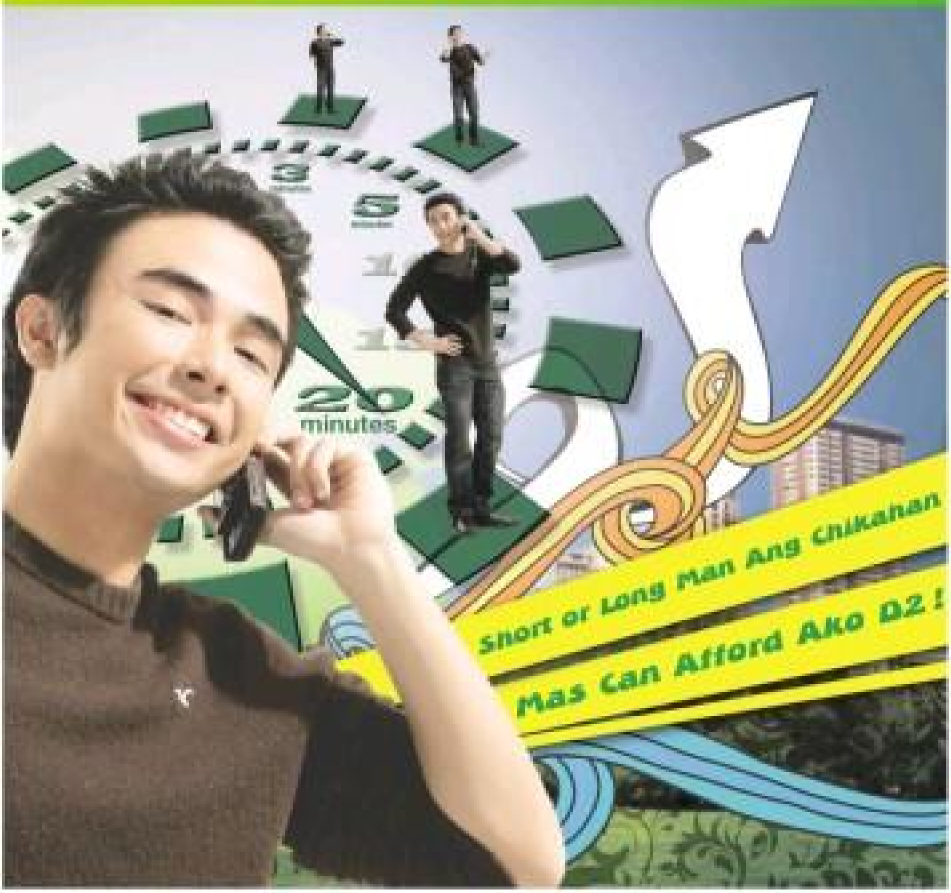
Across the NATION

Abu Sayyaf releases kidnapped student

ZAMBOANGA CITY—IT WAS indeed a Christmas gift for the family.

Moro rebels launch attacks on civilian villages in Cotabato

SMART Buddy



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A plus
METRO
Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

[illegible]

Did you know...

[illegible]

Teenager chased, killed in Tondo street shooting

By Jeannette I. Andrade

IT LOOKED LIKE A SCENE STRAIGHT OUT of an action movie.

[illegible]

Homicide investigators are conducting follow-up operations to determine the identities of the suspects and the motive behind the killing.

CHRISTMAS GET-TOGETHER [illegible]

Korean writes 'Sorry' to GF, then hangs self

By Jeannette I. Andrade

[illegible]

Man robbed, killed in front of church

[illegible]

Jeannette I. Andrade

CHRISTMAS DAY AT THE PARK
Thousands of families in Metro Manila celebrated Christmas day by going to various shopping malls and parks like this one at the Quezon City Memorial Circle.

Manila judge junks anew P4.5-M Sulpicio damage suit vs Pag-asa

By Tina G. Santos

[illegible]

1 of 2 suspects in pregnant woman's death nabbed by cops

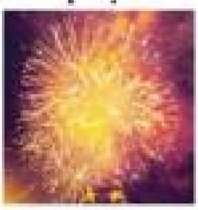
By Jeannette I. Andrade

[illegible]

HOLIDAY REMINDERS

Shun fireworks display

By Alcuin Papa



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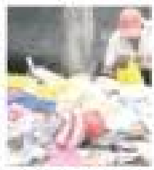
Segregate holiday trash

By Allison W. Lopez



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METROBRIEFS

Muntinlupa city teachers, workers cited

[illegible]

QCPD offers to train UP security force

[illegible]

Guinea coup head issues ultimatum to gov't leaders

82% of Americans approve Obama transition to power

BBC reporter faces 15 years in Thai prison

WorldBriefs

Thai stimulus

Ukraine gas blast

Pardon revoked

Emotional lift

Snared in NY politics

Disadvantaged kids

Bankrupt dairy

UN slams Burma

Buried in snowbank

Russia sex shop

Iran hangs 9

The WORLD

Editor: Lawrence B. Quiazo

Christmas: Bethlehem festive, Gaza violent

BETHLEHEM, WEST BANK—CHRISTIANS CELEbrated Bethlehem's merriest Christmas in eight years on Wednesday, with hotels booked solid, Manger Square bustling with families and Israeli and Palestinian forces cooperating to make things run smoothly.

The festivities in the West Bank town contrasted sharply with Hamas-run Gaza. While revelers in Bethlehem launched pink fireworks from a rooftop, militants fired more than 60 rockets and mortar shells at Israeli towns and villages, sending people scrambling for bomb shelters.

The latest attacks and an Israeli air strike on rocket launchers that killed one militant and wounded two appeared to have buried a shaky six-month cease-fire that expired last week.

But 73 kilometers away, outside the Church of the Nativity, the traditional birthplace of Jesus, good-natured crowds of pilgrims and townspeople gathered ahead of the Midnight Mass that is the holiday's highlight.

A dozen pilgrims from India, Canada, Britain, the United States and other countries sang impromptu renditions of Christmas carols. Daniel Fitzgerald, 57, of Sioux City, Iowa, played the trumpet.

"Jesus was the prince of peace, and he can bring that peace to you. We pray for you," Fitzgerald told a gaggle of children who gathered to listen.

In Manger Square, vendors hawked roasted peanuts and Santa hats. Many in the square were Muslims out to enjoy their town's annual moment in the center of world attention.

"Bethlehem is like the soul of the universe, and it's like an explosion of love here," said Marino Cruz, 46, a fashion photographer from Rome, Italy.

Bethlehem, which has suffered from the Israeli-Palestinian fighting of recent years, is now surrounded on three sides by concrete slabs and fences—part of a barrier Israel has built against Palestinian suicide attackers, some of whom came from Bethlehem. The Palestinians see the barrier as a land grab and say it has strangled the town's economy.

Emigration has cut the town's Christian population to an estimated 35 to 50 percent of its 40,000 people, compared with 90 percent in the 1950s.

"Wars does not produce peace, prisons do not guarantee stability. The highest of walls do not ensure security," said Latin Patriarch Fouad Twal, the Catholic Church's top cleric in the Holy Land, in an address at the Midnight Mass. "Peace is a gift of God, and only God can give that peace."

Israel has held peace talks over the past year with the moderate West Bank government of President Mahmoud Abbas, and the spirit of cooperation has allowed Palestinian forces a limited measure of independence in places like Bethlehem, under Israeli overall security control.

Ayed Sichan, the Israeli military officer responsible for coordination in Bethlehem, said this week that he could talk to his Palestinian counterpart anytime, "24 hours a day" about everything from police patrols to garbage collection. Every detail of the holiday preparations was meticulously discussed by the sides, Sichan said.

Sales times meant the Palestinians have counted more than one million visitors to Bethlehem so far this year, a rise of more than 20,000 from 2007. *AP*

LATIN Patriarch Fouad Twal, the Catholic Church's top cleric in the Holy Land, carries a statue of the baby Jesus after celebrating the Christmas Midnight Mass at the Church of the Nativity in the West Bank town of Bethlehem. *AP PHOTO*

More snow and ice vex travelers in America

CHICAGO—HUNDREDS OF holiday travelers spent the night in America's second busiest airport and some of them faced the prospect of doing it again on Christmas Eve as airports across America recovered from a barrage of snow and ice storms.

Conditions improved on Wednesday, but highways were still dangerously slippery in some areas. At least 20 highway deaths had been blamed on the weather.

About 500 travelers had to spend the night at Chicago's O'Hare International, the nation's second busiest airport, after stormy weather canceled more than 500 flights on Tuesday, according to Chicago Aviation Department spokesperson Karen Pride.

More than 100 flights were canceled at O'Hare on Wednesday.

City of Chicago Aviation Department spokesperson Greg Cunningham said airlines at O'Hare requested 75 cots for passengers on Wednesday night.

Complicating matters at O'Hare, an American Airlines plane hit an icy patch while turning onto a runway and slid sideways into the grass. There were no injuries in the Wednesday evening incident, and 34 passengers were to be put on other flights leaving the same night.

The New York metro area's Kennedy and Newark airports reported arrival delays of up to three hours, the Federal Aviation Administration reported.

"The airlines are dealing with nothing but unhappy customers," said Mike Conway, spokesperson for Detroit's Metropolitan Airport, where delays were reported in departures and arrivals because of conditions elsewhere in the country.

The weather service posted winter storm warnings and advisories for large parts of the West, plus parts of the Midwest and the Northeast.

Despite more snow falling on Wednesday in the Seattle area, operations at Sea-Tac Airport were back to normal on Wednesday, said spokesperson Terri-Ann Betancourt.

She said the last of thousands of passengers who were stranded by weekend cancellations were gone by Tuesday, and the only flight cancellations were caused by delays or cancellations at other airports.

Also Wednesday, an avalanche in the Rocky Mountains killed two snowmobilers in northern Utah. The Utah Avalanche Center warned people not to venture into backcountry. *AP*

CHRISTMAS IN SYDNEY

French tourists Perrine Clemenz (left), Delphine Pollet, and Come Dubois (right), kick up their heels as they celebrate Christmas on Sydney's Bondi Beach, Thursday Dec. 25. *AP*

New York Times ad revenue drops 20 percent in November

NEW YORK—NEW YORK TIMES CO. ON Wednesday said that advertising revenue dropped 20.9 percent in November from a year ago, as the financial crisis prompted steep declines in classified and national ad spending.

The sharp economic deterioration, which followed the turmoil in the financial markets this September, has exacerbated an already weak advertising market for newspapers as readers and advertisers have migrated to the Internet.

As part of its efforts to shore up its core newspaper assets amid the slump, the company is actively seeking buyers for its 17.5 percent stake in the holding company of the Boston Red Sox, according to reports Wednesday.

The holding company, New England Sports Ventures, owns the baseball club, Fenway Park and a majority interest in the New England Sports Network.

The Wall Street Journal cited an estimate by Barclays Capital that New York Times Co. stake in the holding company could be worth about $166 million.

The company's flagship paper reported the effort to sell the Red Sox stake, citing a person briefed on the plans.

The New York Times said the company was "seeking to raise cash and shield its newspaper franchise from rapidly falling revenue." It said the company paid $75 million for the stake in 2002.

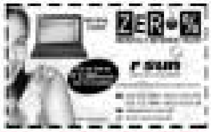
The company's ad revenue, which makes up nearly two-thirds of total revenue, had booked declines of 16.2 percent in October and 14.1 percent in September.

Total revenue from continuing operations fell 15.9 percent last month.

At The New York Times' news media segment, advertising revenue dropped 21.6 percent, while circulation revenue grew 4.2 percent. At its flagship newspaper, the New York-based company said weakness in the studio entertainment, national automotive, book and financial-services categories drove declines in national ad spending. Classified ad revenue in the segment also plunged 30.9 percent. *AP*

BUSINESS

Editor Raul O. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma



Remittances seen growing 13% to $16.9B this year

Bangko Sentral expects $500-M BOP surplus

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE BANKING SYSTEM will likely capture $16.3 billion in overseas Filipino remittances this year, up 13 percent from a year ago, despite the major global economic downturn, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas estimated.

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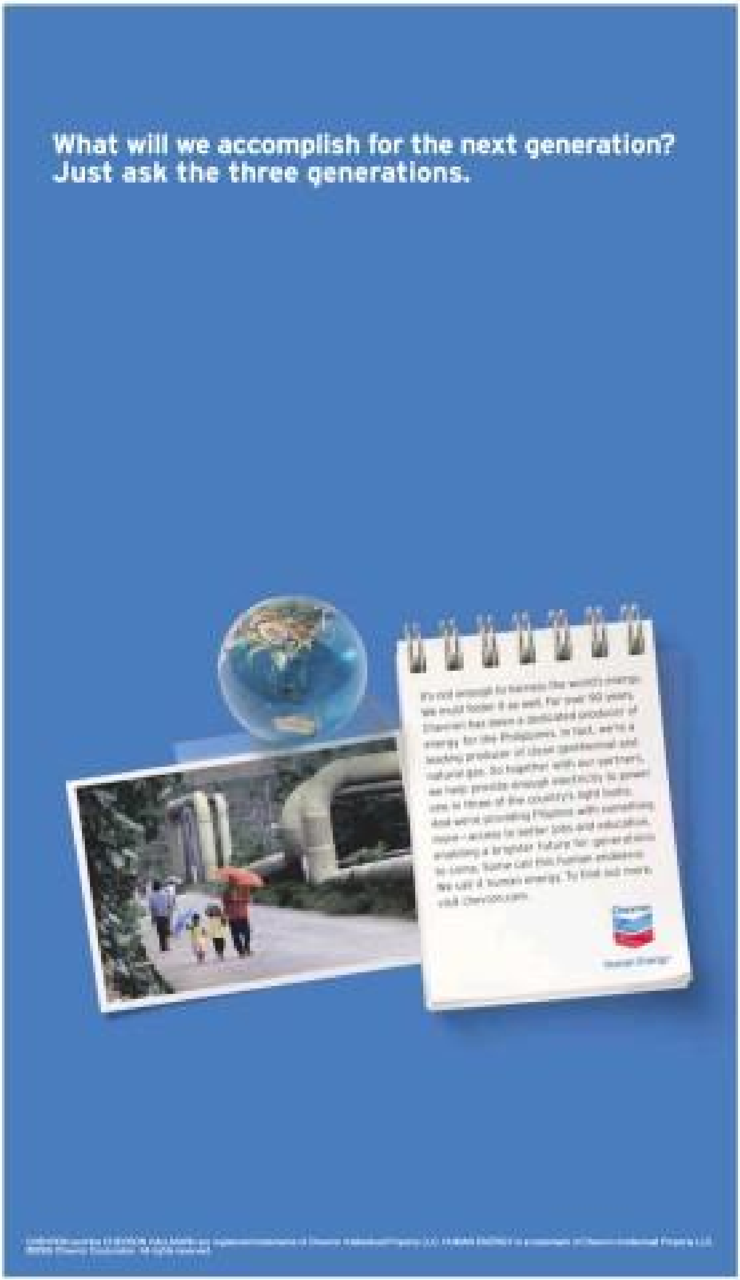
REMITTANCES/B3

Meralco joins plea against power line shutdown

By Abigail L. Ho

[illegible]

MERALCO/B3



Toyota not about to put brakes on RP operations

Philippine unit to push Lexus brand in 2009

Post-Christmas ticklers

Corporate Securities Info

Raul J. Palabrica

Remittances seen growing 13% to $16.9B this year

Meralco joins plea against power line shutdown

DBP, Landbank OK ₱6-B loan to ICTSI

DA sees corn production increasing by 7% in 2009

Areas planted to the crop to be expanded by up to 200,000 ha

Public sector posts ₱48.4-B budget surplus

IT innovators honored

PRULINK

PRU LIFE UK

Business *Friday*

Making a splash, without much noise

Hotel brings food, service closer to diners

CHOCOLATE Truffle with Lemon Curd

MODERN Caesar Salad

Will advertising take turn for better in coming Year of the Ox?

MANNY Pacquiao, the best advertising for the Philippines this year

LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan
Contributing Editors Apples Aberin-Sadhwani, Jessel Eppenen and Ria Francisco-Prieto

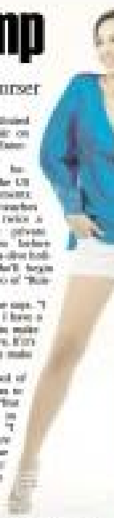
THE CHANEL classic reissued in 2005, the 50th anniversary of Chanel's 2.55 signaling

2008 'Recessionista' must-haves

The buzz word is not so much sacrifice as compromise

Teresa Herrera lights up The Ramp

The fashion emporium that nurtures upstarts picks the 'Project Runway' host as its first endorser



IT'S THE RIGHT FIT: TERESA Herrera anointed as the face of The Ramp.

Straightforward

Formal line

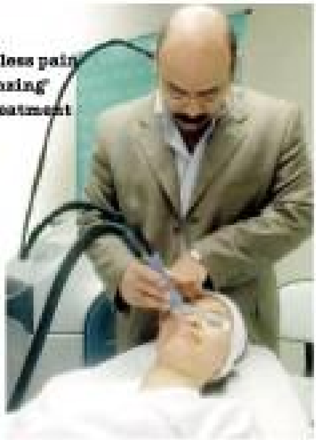
Eco-chic hair treatments

2008 'Recessionista' must-haves

Jewelry

New 'lunchtime procedure' lives up to its tag

Renew by Affirm promises less pain and less downtime, no 'bronzing' but just a mild glow post-treatment



'Right level'

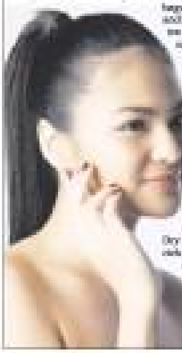
Demo

'Safer'

DIY stress busters

To treat dry and flaky skin, make a honey facemask

Kelly Misa



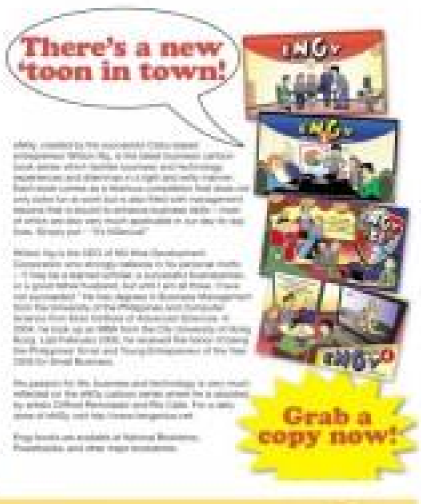
Free phone for new credit card holders

Practical gift fragrances

Kissy Sakai

No need to suffer for beauty

'Invisible' braces, anyone?



Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan
LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty
Contributing Editors: Apples Aberin-Sadhwani, Jenni Epperson and Ria Francisco-Prieto

A dynamic, eclectic 2008

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

From a map on a shirt to new fashion-show concepts

DESPITE THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN, the local fashion scene was as dynamic as ever in 2008. Thanks to a creative, resourceful and passionate industry, new or reworked concepts (from specialty boutiques to the latest map shirts or afternoon tea shows) sprang to life.

Here are the things that made 2008 truly exciting.

THE PHILIPPINE map emblazoned on C2 shirts

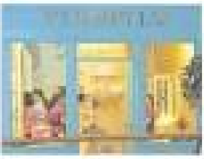
C2 My Pilipinas shirts

Designer Rhett Eala took the Philippine map and made it the cornerstone of C2, the younger, hipper and now extremely popular spin-off of Collezione, that '80s brand of T-shirts we all used to wear.

Eala also had a My Pilipinas exhibit of his modern paintings inspired by the Philippine map—lineamaps in witty new styles. We absolutely loved the fun bleached ink designs he recently launched.

According to Eala, the shirts and dresses are flying off the racks.

For more info, check out http://collezione-c2.com



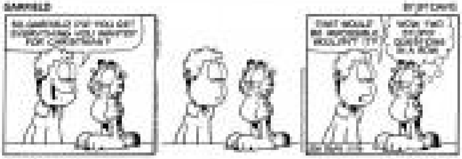
THE ACCESSORY Lab at the Powerplant mall

Accessory Lab

This pared line of a boutique is a treasure trove of fun, feminine, fantastic finds. Its main feature is a bridge line of pieces with semi-precious stones set in silver.

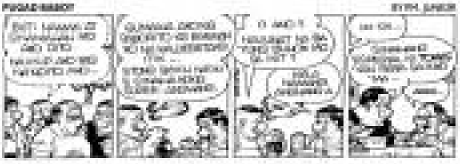
DYNAMIC D3

GARFIELD



A. LIPIN

PUGAD BABOY

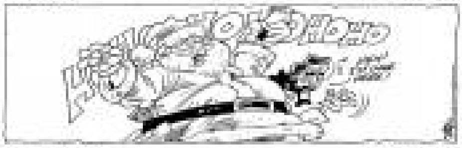


DICK TRACY

LOVEKNOTS

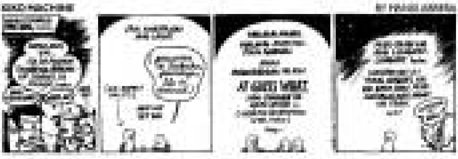
JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY

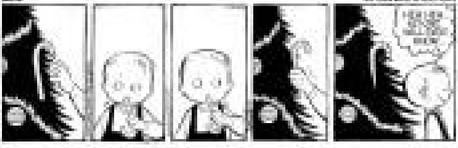


BABY BLUES

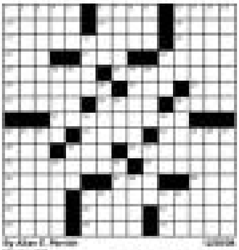
TULDOK

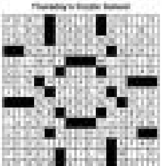


BEN



DAILY CROSSWORD





HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

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				4			1	6
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9	5			3				
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Difficulty Level ★★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

A dynamic, eclectic 2008

From page D1

A TREASURE trove of fantastic finds

This new boutique has a whole range of offerings—18 karat classic gold pieces to jewelry that costs as low as P850. The store also carries designer jewelry by Daphne Oseña Paez, Candy B. Dizon, Janina D. Hinolan, Victoria and Beatriz, [illegible] and J. Benjamin.

It's probably the only place in Manila where you can score an almost impossible-to-get Hermès Birkin bag (for now, anyway)! You can also choose upon new or preowned Louis Vuitton, Goyard and Chanel bags.

But what's really special about the place is that the items are handpicked by the boutique's well-traveled, resident style maven [illegible] (http://[illegible].blogspot.com/).

ENGAGING window display of baubles

HERMÈS Birkin bag, anyone? It's brand new, mind you.

FITNESS FASHION, presented by Samsung and Inquirer Lifestyle

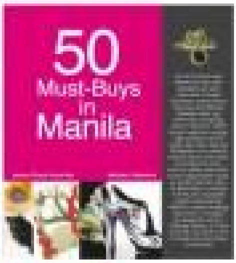
Fitness.Fashion

High fashion married active wear in this groundbreaking event that featured some of Manila's top designers such as Ivar Aseron, Rajo Laurel and Randy Ortiz, and top retail brands such as Adidas, Nike Golf, Speedo, Puma and Ripley.

Together with Samsung and with the cooperation of the Peninsula and the Waterfront hotel, Inquirer Lifestyle presented the show in both Manila and Cebu. Personalities like Senator Pia Cayetano, [illegible] and socialite [illegible] were among the big names who gamely participated in the event.

Email the author at [illegible]@inquirer.com.ph

SENATOR Pia Cayetano

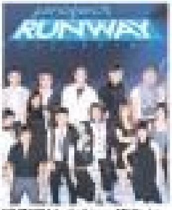


Project Runway Philippines

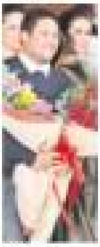
I'm not saying this because I was a judge in Project Runway Philippines (PRP) season 1. I do believe the show is a great way to showcase Philippine talent and ingenuity. Based on the public's response, Solar Entertainment was spot-on when it franchised this top-rating reality show.

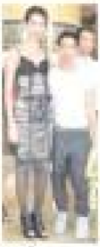
"There's nothing like television to increase the reach of something like fashion, which is often viewed as elitist. Plus, it's a foolproof way to promote designers on a bigger scale.

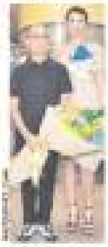
Here's to discovering more talent in PRP season 2. Hopefully, we'll find someone who'll really knock us all our feet.



WHO WILL be the future of Philippine fashion?







RAJO Laurel JOEY Samson CESAR Gaupo

Fashion Watch Quartet

Thanks to industry stalwart [illegible] and his team, many designers got to present their works in a yearlong series of shows at Makati Shangri-La.

Young designers like [illegible], [illegible] like Joey Samson and [illegible] and well-loved master Cesar Gaupo, to name a few, took turns presenting collections in well-attended and well-covered shows presented with Nokia.

The series is a much-needed shot in the arm for Philippine fashion. Here's to more, more, more of the same in 2009.

THE ULTIMATE guide to shopping in Manila

50 must-buys in Manila

Want to know where you can get a really nice batting mitt? Or are you searching for the best organic bread in Manila? "50 Must-Buys in Manila" answers these questions and a lot more.

Jeweler Janina Dizon Hinolan and [illegible] stylist Michael Salientes compiled some of the best 100-percent locally-made but cutting-edge products and services in this invaluable guide. Known for their discerning tastes, the authors and their shopaholic friends scoured the metro for the best of the best in categories like clothing, home, food and drink.

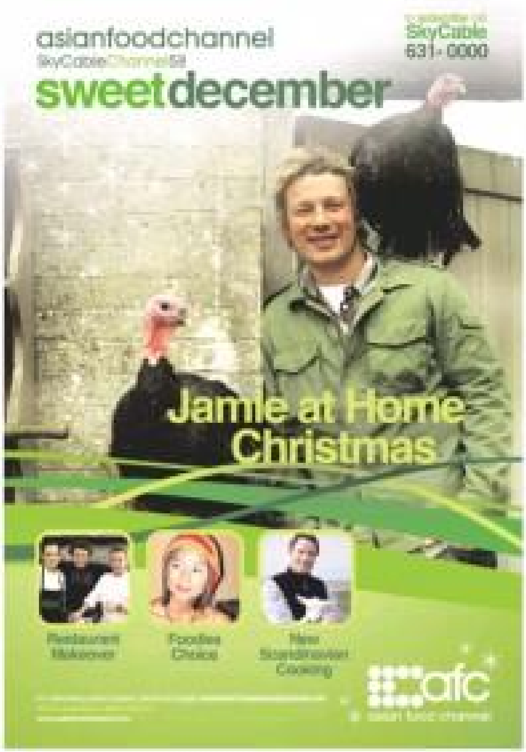
Experience something extraordinary of Manila's shopping scene. "It's not all about fashion. We also featured food, products like homemade candles, handmade toys and [illegible] instruments," said Salientes.

You'll also find accessories by [illegible], [illegible] by [illegible], cocktail wear made of hand-painted [illegible] by [illegible] and hats by [illegible].

Available in Fully Booked and Powerbooks.

[illegible]

[illegible]



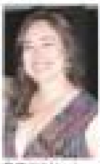
BUBBLES Priscilla, Raymond Gutierrez and Ara Dizon

CHRIS Cayzer and Jessica Wilson

DAZZLING hostess of the sugar fun Christmas bash, PMPC Star Awardee Ruffa Gutierrez

TINA Zaragoza, architect Eric Miclat, Dinno Lee and me!

OGIE Alcasid, Ruffa Mae Quinto, Heidi Ng and Jessica Guevarra



THELMA Monsod

GORGEOUS Iza Calzado and CJ Jaravata

HOST of the evening, banker and businessman Noel Oñate with eye-catching newlywed Meg Mutuc-Arcenas

4 show-biz folks celebrate their victories

ALICE IN WONDERLAND SHOULD have been the theme when banker and businessman Noel Oñate held a celebration bash for [illegible] TV star Ruffa Gutierrez at his sprawling home in an upscale village. [illegible]

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alvin Tiu Magno using YKL Photo Solutions

[illegible] Ruffa Mae Quinto and Ogie Alcasid won Best Comedy Actress and Actor, dahlings.

[illegible]

It was a super fun night celebrated by some of the most beautiful faces on the ramp and TV who sang their lungs out till 4 a.m. Now that's a party, pafanggas. [illegible]

New Bacchus outlet

Bacchus Epicerie recently opened its [illegible] at Rockwell Power Plant Mall with Manolo Lopez and wife Mariborn Lagdameo, [illegible] the ribbon-cutting with Rockwell Land president Nestor Padilla and, naturally, the proud owners of Bacchus Epicerie, Alex and Clifford Lichaytoo.

"Bacchus Epicerie is a specialty store that contains the finest brands of food items and kitchenware imported from the United States and Europe."

[illegible] popular Maja Oliveros-Co, dahlings.

[illegible]

Check out Bacchus Epicerie on Lopez Drive, Power Plant Mall, near the [illegible].

[illegible] of Japanese MAC knives."

Carol Lopez birthday

[illegible] Carol Lopez, celebrated her birthday in Congress, dahlings. [illegible]

[illegible]

Nancy Harel marks 25th year

It was a sparkling soiree, pafanggas, that marked the silver anniversary of one of our [illegible] Nancy Harel & Associates Inc. (NHAI). [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Have a merry Christmas with your beloved family and friends.

ROCKWELL first couple Manolo Lopez and wife Mariborn Lagdameo with Town and Country editor in chief Monique Villonco

LISA Coosa, Christine Cameron and Maloo Pineda

ROCHELLE Moreno and Rockwell Land president Nestor Padilla

JOANNA and Paul Francisco

MANOLET Dario and Mike Toledo

CHRIS Peterson and TJ Trinidad

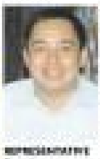
WILL Devaughn and Czarina Monsod

PHOEMELA Barranda and Ruffa Gutierrez

CAROL Garcia and Miriam Quiambao

BENJAMIN Yap, Liza Gonzales and Lynette Snow

BROTHERS Alex, Clifford and Alex Lichaytoo, wine connoisseurs and owners of the Bacchus epicerie at Rockwell Power Plant Mall, with Sheila Ang



REPRESENTATIVE Dato Arroyo

REPRESENTATIVE Simeon Datumanong

SUPER couple—and owners of the popular steak house Melo's—Paul and Connie Mecenas with our Queen for a Day Nancy Harel and husband, businessman Joel Harel

OUTSOURCE PR's Zenny Zorilla and Elbert Cuenca

CHEF Gaita Fores and Bacchus Epicerie designer Maja Oliveros-Co

SPEAKER Prospero Nograles

THE CELEBRATION with present and former employees. Standing: [illegible] (fourth from right)

KENICHI Mia, Maja Oliveros-Co, [illegible] and [illegible]

YOUNG politicians Rep. [illegible], Jinggoy Estrada, [illegible] and Sonny Angara, with Representative Carol Lopez

SMART women legislators, Representative [illegible], the celebrator, Carlos Concolindo and [illegible]

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

Christmas personalized, if you please

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

SHOW BIZ CELEBS share with Inquirer Entertainment wishes for themselves this Christmas season and throughout the New Year.

FORUM

Rachelle Ann Go

I simply wish for happiness. For as long as you have happiness, everything will follow: love, peace, joy. Every year, I also wish that my family stays together. Every Christmas, we hang out at home, eating from morning to night. I'm still far from owning my dream home—a plain house in Antipolo. I'm saving up for it. Maybe in two to three years…

Alessandra De Rossi

I'm getting my Christmas wish this year. I'll be spending the holidays with my parents and two younger sisters in Rome, Italy. I'll be there for two weeks. Every year, my Christmas is sad, full of drama. I usually have a movie for the Metro Manila Film Fest, so after the parade of floats, I'd go home, tired and lonely, to an empty house. This year, I'll be surrounded by the people I love. As a bonus, I'll get to shoot a music video in Italy. Bongga, di ba?

Ruffa Gutierrez

It's only right that my New Year's wish this year is for my parents: that they stick to their fitness program and eat healthy so their recovery will be quicker. (Dad Eddie had an angioplasty; mom Annabelle had two myomas removed.) What's the use of fame and fortune, if a family member is not well? I took charge of our noche buena menu this year and ordered organic and healthy dishes: roast turkey, roast beef, steamed lapu-lapu, whole-wheat pasta, Caesar salad. No pork. I also hope that my entire family will be spared from controversies next year. For myself, I hope to take voice lessons next year so I can record a CD and accept more singing engagements. The only song I can sing live is [illegible] "Shalala Lala"! I also hope to launch my own line of bags and clothes for [illegible] & Co.

Christian Bautista

I just wish to spend more time with my family. I've been so busy lately and all I want is quality time with them—maybe for something as simple as late night pizza, bowling, prayer time or dinner together. But the best treat would be to go on vacation abroad with my parents and two brothers. No work, just us together. I'd like to travel to South Africa, Brazil and France with them. Every Christmas, the entire clan gathers in Cavite. We party. We have games and there's a presentation.

Liezel Garcia

For myself and for other "Pinoy Dream Academy" graduates, I wish for more projects. Singing is what we want and it would be great if we could continue living our dream. If there's one thing about our batch on PDA, we are pretty solid and we support each other. For my batch mates and my family, I wish for our bond to grow stronger and for everyone to remain healthy.

—[illegible]

CHRISTIAN Bautista

RUFFA Gutierrez

RACHELLE Ann Go

Christmas personalized...

From page [illegible]

Bugsy Drilon

My wish is for all these blessings not to stop coming... not just for me, but also for my batch mates on "Pinoy Dream Academy." I also wish for good health for my family, as well as for my friends' families. I also pray for Filipinos to become more enlightened. We all know how [illegible] some of us can be. I hope we will improve as a people next year. I wish my cat Gappy would stop attacking me. After PDA, she no longer recognizes me.

Erik Santos

On top of my wish list is good health for me and my family. If you're healthy, you can work harder and become happier. I also hope for more projects. Every year, I usually get my wish: a simple Christmas celebration with my family. We go to church together and have noche buena after. Lastly, I pray that my fans will support my CDs and watch my concerts next year.

Nash Aguas

I just got my

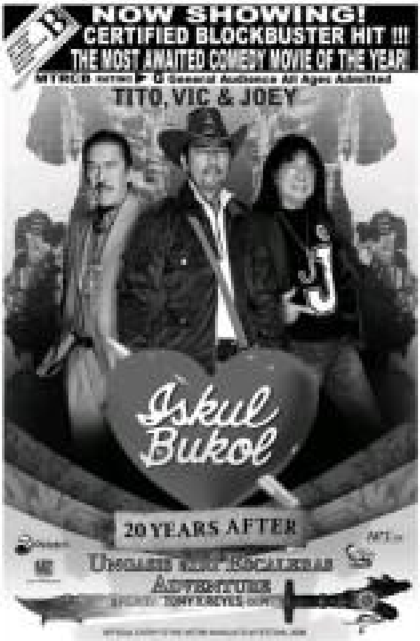
Nash Aguas

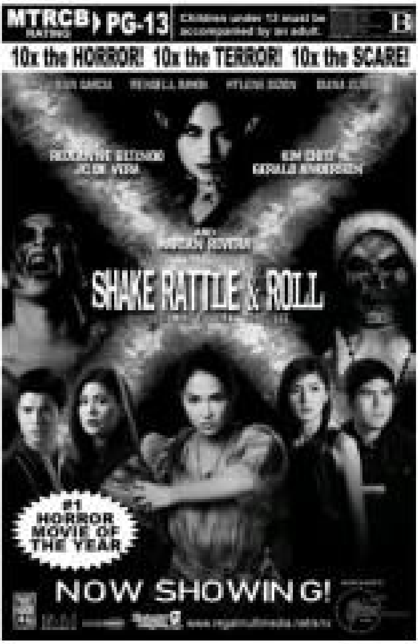
wish: a baby brother or sister. My mom is pregnant. It's my first time to become a big brother. I'm excited because I'll finally have a playmate at home. When we grow up, I will help him in his homework.

Katrina "Hopia" Legaspi

I hope to have more projects. I'm in that awkward stage — not yet a teenager, but no longer a child, so it's difficult to find movie or TV roles for me.

E-mail: [illegible]@hotmail.com



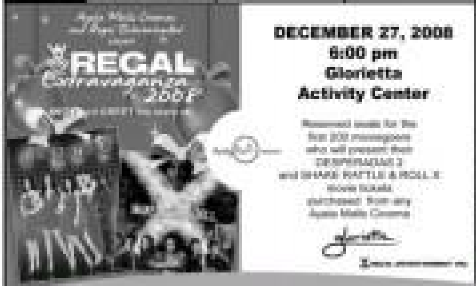


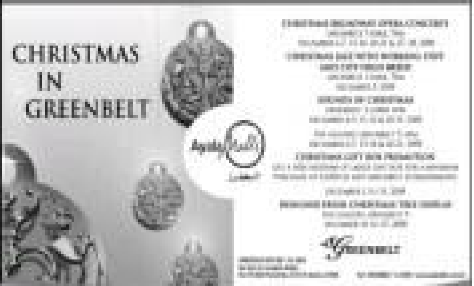
At the Cinemas

Cinema	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Glorietta 1	Magkaibigan	Shake, Rattle & Roll X	Desperadas 2	Dayo			
Glorietta 4	One Night Only	Iskul Bukol	Baler	Shake, Rattle & Roll X	Desperadas 2	Ang Tanging Ina Nyong Lahat	Dayo
Greenbelt 1	One Night Only	Dayo					
Greenbelt 3	One Night Only	Baler	Iskul Bukol	Magkaibigan	Ang Tanging Ina Nyong Lahat		
Alabang Town Center	Shake, Rattle & Roll X	Desperadas 2	Ang Tanging Ina Nyong Lahat	Dayo	Baler		
Ayala Center Cebu	Desperadas 2	Shake, Rattle & Roll X	One Night Only	[illegible]			
Market! Market!	Magkaibigan	Iskul Bukol	Baler	One Night Only	Ang Tanging Ina Nyong Lahat		
TriNoma	Magkaibigan	Iskul Bukol	Baler	Dayo	Ang Tanging Ina Nyong Lahat	Desperadas 2	Shake, Rattle & Roll X

At the Malls

Mall	Event
Glorietta	[illegible] December 20 & 27, Glorietta [illegible]
Greenbelt	Christmas Broadway Opera Concerts
Alabang Town Center	Christmas Cantata
Ayala Center Cebu	Giant Christmas Tree & Gingerbread House
Market! Market!	Ayala Malls Welcome 2009 Sale! Jan. 2-18, Mallwide
[illegible]	[illegible]
Ayala Museum	[illegible]
TriNoma	Christmas Spectacular: Lights & Music Show [illegible] Ayala Malls Welcome 2009 Sale! Jan. 2-18, Mallwide





Glorietta Greenbelt Alabang Town Center Ayala Center Cebu Market! Market! TriNoma

JAYANN Bautista

Guest artist Ramiele Malubay gave a wonderful performance, that recalled positive comments of AI judges

Idols take . . .

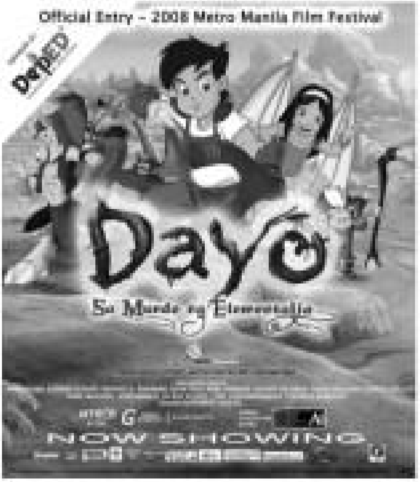
From page E1

women in the audience, Alcasid seemed to have fun mugging for camera phones. It was his saving grace, with volunteers helping finish the songs.

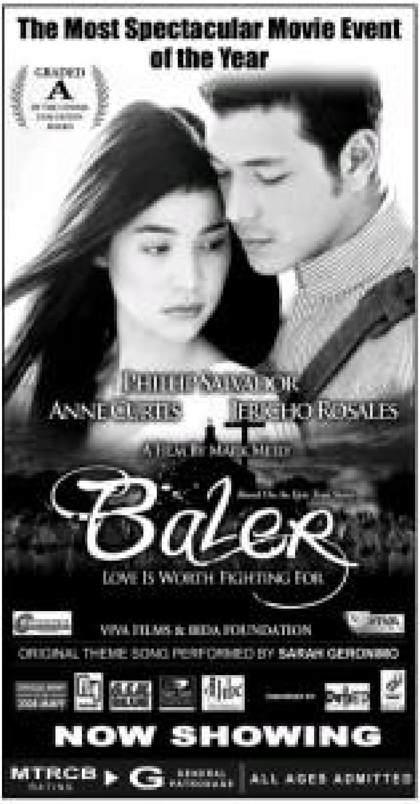
In the show wore on, it became clear that nothing unexpected was going to happen. The performers were all in their comfort zones. Espina sang her oft-repeated rendition of Alicia Keys' "If I Ain't Got You" and Alcasid relied on his greatest hits. The "Pinoy Idol" finalists succeeded only in turning out a typical episode of a Sunday noontime variety program.

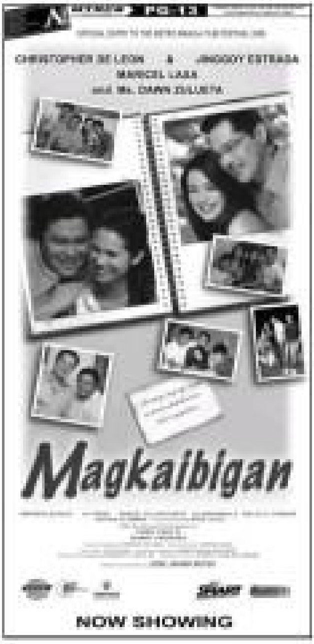
Happily, one dared to be different. Though seemingly aware, Malubay gave a wonderful performance, which called to mind positive comments of her AI mentors. She didn't disappoint with her renditions of Lani Misalucha's "Bukas Na Lang Kita Mamahalin" and Regine Velasquez's "You Are My Song" and "Dadalhin."

Malubay capped her medley with her memorable "Idol" rendition of Dusty Springfield's "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me," plus the holiday standard "I'll Be Home for Christmas," with clips of her homecoming in the background.



GRETCHEN Espina





High points

Other high points of the two-hour concert were a medley of Alcasid/Velasquez duets from pairs of "Pinoy Idol" finalists—Sheryl Cello and Jayann Bautista, Kid Camaya and Penelope, and Sabrina Navarro and Espina. Their heartfelt renditions proved they have come a long way from their auditions earlier this year, revealing maturity and enhanced skills in intonation and harmony.

Another plus point was a spot number by former musical theater artist Bo Manalo—now an OPM singing opera standards to gondola passengers in a Venetian-type facility in Macau—who did a stirring version of Puccini's "Nessun Dorma."

Really, the show could have done much more with its fantastic roster of performers.

Alcasid could have been given more numbers with the kids, and more challenging arrangements would have enhanced each featured singer's range and style. To paraphrase the oft-repeated comment from judges to all "Idol" franchises: Better song choices would have made a big difference.

Cruise debuts on Kimmel show

"VALKYRIE" LEAD STAR TOM CRUISE makes a debut appearance on "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" on Dec. 29.

Cruise participates in the "Touch the Head" competition and exchanges Secret Santa gifts with Kimmel.

Tonight, Jimmy highlights the week's best moments and [illegible] guests.

The late-night talk show airs Mondays to Fridays at 10 p.m., with encore telecasts on Saturdays and Sundays at 6 p.m.

Rose parade

On Jan. 1, "120th Rose Parade" with the theme "[illegible] the World's Celebration" airs 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Studio 23 and at 9 a.m. on ABS-CBN.

The prestigious annual event will be led by this year's Grand Marshal, US celebrity chef Emeril Lagasse, who will also toss the coin for the 95th Rose Bowl Game.

P1-M jackpot

Until tomorrow, "Pinoy Ka, Game KNB?" celebrates the season of giving by bringing in celebrities and former PGKNB winners to play for the P1 million jackpot, in behalf of beneficiaries from all over the country.

"Pinoy Ka, Game KNB," hosted by Edu Manzano, airs on ABS-CBN, before "Wowowee."

Comic adventure

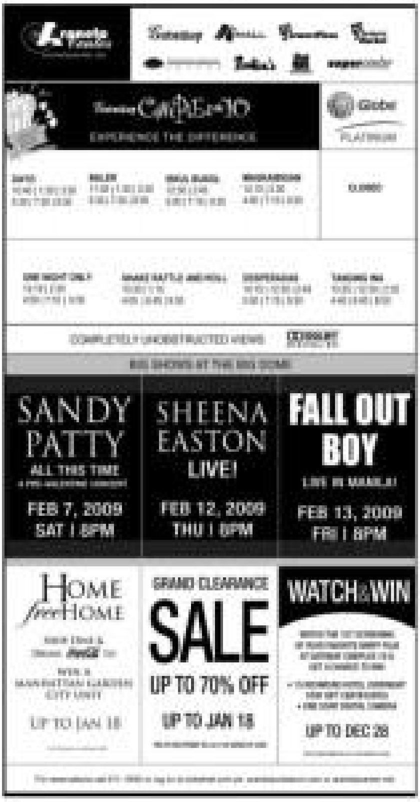
Drake Bell and Josh Peck star in a brand new, original television movie, "Merry Christmas, Drake & Josh," on Nickelodeon at 8 p.m. and tomorrow at 12:30 p.m.

The merry adventure unfolds as a small lie [illegible] of toys — John Drake and Josh — promise an adorable little girl that her foster parents and siblings will have "the best Christmas ever."

Mystery movies

Emeritus professor Archer Coe has been poisoned and suspects are piling up, from a jealous wife to a rival teacher. Ex-cult criminologist Jonathan Maxwell attempts to solve the baffling mystery in "Murder 101: College can be Murder" on the Hallmark Channel on Jan. 3 at 9 p.m.

On Jan. 10 at 9 p.m., the movie channel presents "McBride 9: [illegible]" about a [illegible] the only person who [illegible] suspect in the murder of his pregnant wife. The death of a [illegible] in the case the death [illegible] in "McBride 9: [illegible]" on Jan. 11 at 9 p.m.



Robert Downey Jr. says he fought to get the role of the Iron Man

Amusing . . .

Robert Downey Jr.

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

1 DAYO GP
2 ANG TANGING INA NYONG LAHAT PG 13
3 ONE NIGHT ONLY R 13
4 MAGKAIBIGAN PG 13

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2 DESPERADAS
3 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL X
4 ONE NIGHT ONLY
5 BALER
6 TANGING INA NYONG LAHAT
7 ISKUL BUKOL
8 MAGKAIBIGAN
9 TANGING INA NYONG LAHAT
10 DAYO

ERMITA
1 BALER
2 ONE NIGHT ONLY
3 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL X
4 DESPERADAS
5 TANGING INA NYONG LAHAT
6 DAYO
7 MAGKAIBIGAN
8 ISKUL BUKOL
9 ISKUL BUKOL

METRO EAST
1 ONE NIGHT ONLY
2 BALER
3 ISKUL BUKOL
4 MAGKAIBIGAN
5 DAYO
6 TANGING INA NYONG LAHAT
7 DESPERADAS
8 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL X

NOVALICHES
1 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL X
2 DESPERADAS
3 TANGING INA NYONG LAHAT
4 DAYO
5 DAYO
6 TANGING INA NYONG LAHAT
7 DESPERADAS
8 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL X

PIONEER
1 DESPERADAS
2 TANGING INA NYONG LAHAT
3 ONE NIGHT ONLY
4 MAGKAIBIGAN

STA. ROSA
1 ISKUL BUKOL
2 TANGING INA NYONG LAHAT
3 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL X
4 DESPERADAS
5 BALER

LIPA
1 ISKUL BUKOL
2 TANGING INA NYONG LAHAT
3 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL X
4 DESPERADAS
5 BALER

DASMARIÑAS
1 ISKUL BUKOL
2 TANGING INA NYONG LAHAT
3 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL X
4 DESPERADAS
5 BALER

IMUS
1 DESPERADAS
2 TANGING INA NYONG LAHAT
3 DAYO
4 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL X
5 ISKUL BUKOL
6 BALER

ANGELES
1 ISKUL BUKOL
2 TANGING INA NYONG LAHAT
3 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL X
4 BALER

STARMILLS
1 BALER
2 ONE NIGHT ONLY
3 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL X
4 DESPERADAS
5 TANGING INA NYONG LAHAT
6 DAYO

BACOLOD
1 ISKUL BUKOL
2 TANGING INA NYONG LAHAT
3 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL X
4 DESPERADAS
5 BALER
6 ONE NIGHT ONLY

ILOILO
1 MAGKAIBIGAN
2 ISKUL BUKOL
3 ONE NIGHT ONLY
4 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL X
5 TANGING INA NYONG LAHAT
6 DESPERADAS

2009 Metro Manila Film Festival Entries

Idols take the stage with a judge

By Cenny Plaza
Contributor
Photos by Rodel Rotoni

Review

IT WAS BILLED AS A one-night encore to a reality-based TV talent search that discovers singing stars expected to further showcase their talents in uncharted territory. As a bonus, the young "Idols" shared the stage with an "Idol" judge who just celebrated his 20th year in show business.

The show featured Pinoy pop icon Ogie Alcasid with "Amyrican Idol" Season 7 finalist Ramiele Malubay, "Pinoy Idol" grand champion Gretchen Espina and first runner-up Jonathan Badiola. In the end, people could not help but remark that such an "Idols" night could have achieved more—maybe even end up as something that, as Simon Cowell might say, "would surprise us" or "leave us mesmerized."

The last date of the two-night "Ogie Sings with the Idols" concert at the Aliw Theater last Sunday took off with a grand entrance: Alcasid mimicking Ronaldo Lopez's famous 7 finale performance of his sad interpretation "I Am Your Brother," complete with a marching band. Also, the succeeding numbers were mere repeats of Alcasid's performances in previous concerts, with the singer-songwriter dishing out "Kung Sakali" (from his recent all-covers album), improvising a reggae version of "Bakit Pa," and reprising his own composition, "Bato Lahat."

He struggled with difficult notes and later admitted that it was a "miracle" he made it to the concert at all, as he was suffering from a cold. With a voice that intermittently threatened to fail him, he had good use for his humor wit and charm, forestalling

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OGIE Alcasid

RAMIELE Malubay

IN A MEMORABLE interview, Reese Witherspoon suddenly realized a slip, mentioning the name of her boyfriend, Jake Gyllenhaal, when she meant her co-star Vince Vaughn. Blushing, Reese laughed and covered her face with both hands. Then she bent, lifted the tablecloth and used it to cover her face. In the next few minutes, everyone, and Reese herself, was in stitches. PHOTOS BY RUBEN V. NEPALES

Amusing, memorable interviews of 2008

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

LOS ANGELES—REESE WITHERSPOON'S very telling slip of the tongue about her boyfriend, Jake Gyllenhaal, was the highlight of one of our most amusing, memorable interviews of 2008.

This is the first of three parts in which we recall some of the funny, sad, touching and fascinating moments culled from our exchanges with stars this year.

Reese Witherspoon

Let's start with that humorous incident with Reese. The world's top-paid actress, who fiercely refuses to talk about Jake, was discussing her movie with Vince Vaughn, "Four Christmases." She said about the holiday film: "It's somewhat of a romance. The main reason I did this movie was to work with Jake. I mean... Jake..."

Reese suddenly realized her slip... and paused. The room at the Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills reverberated with laughter. Blushing, Reese laughed, too, and covered her face with both hands. Then she bent down, lifted the tablecloth and used it to cover her face.

In the next few minutes, everyone, including Reese, continued laughing. She took a big sip of tea from a cup. Then finally, she managed to say, "Oh, my God. I'm so embarrassed." Blushing, she kept saying, "Oh, my God..."

Then she repeated the sentence that started it all, this time saying the correct actor's name. "The main reason I wanted to make this movie was to work with Vince!" She added, "Because he's so funny and great. Jake is funny too." The mood in the room changed from somber and routine to light and funny. Earlier, the 32-year-old actress was talking rather perfunctorily about the movie she had to promote and pay about. Now we were all in a laughing spirit.

"A little Freudian slip, huh?" Reese was teased. She gamely admitted, "Yeah, I know, isn't it?"

So when Reese was asked why she wouldn't talk about Jake, the man in her life since her divorce from actor Ryan Phillippe, she playfully answered, "Why am I not talking about Jake? I'm talking about Jake, Jake, Jake, Jake ... Jake, Jake, Jake, Jake, Jake, Jake..."

Amid gales of chuckles, she continued, "Jake, Jake, Jake, Jake..."

Are they going to get married? "Oh my gosh," she said and laughed again. "Is this my fault? Did I open this can of worms?" Well, are they going to tie the knot, she was asked again. "We're very happy," she declared. "All is well. Yeah, No plans other than just to be happy."

Emboldened, the reporters asked Reese more questions about Jake. Like, what is great about Jake? "I don't know, you tell me," she playfully parried the question. "You've all met him. You know what's great about him."

Hearing such comments as "He's bright" and "He's cute," Reese said cheerfully, "I agree. I agree."

Scarlett Johansson

Many stars were vocal about their support for Barack Obama in interviews during the US presidential election campaign. Ed Harris actually told us that he was moving out of the US if Obama did not get elected. One of the most passionate about her endorsement of Obama was Scarlett Johansson.

Asked how she and the senator from Illinois met, Scarlett offered this answer: "I was at a function to raise awareness for Obama. I had been supporting Barack online for some years. I couldn't believe that he was actually standing in front of me. I think the first thing I said was really stupid like, 'Hi, nice to meet you. I love your wife. You're married to Michelle. It's really nice to meet her husband.' Or something like that. He was like, 'Oh yeah, she's great. She's my partner. I'll be sure to tell her that.'"

Chuckling over that recollection, Scarlett continued, "That was all I could say because I was so awestruck by this incredible speech that he had just given. And it is true that I found his wife to be an inspiring woman. So it wasn't the most glamorous first meeting."

Colin Farrell

Hollywood's "bad boy" has mellowed, Colin admitted. "The trip, the journey personally got a little bit out of hand so I just stepped back... It was a natural break.... I'm 31. I'm a father and again, I have quieted down selfishly because it suits me. Maybe I just want a little peace."

With the change in pace also came the smaller but more rewarding films like "In Bruges," which recently earned him a Best Comedy/Musical Actor nomination in the Golden Globe Awards.

Colin has revealed that his son James, 5, was diagnosed with Angelman Syndrome, a rare form of cerebral palsy that slows development and impairs speech and motor skills.

Asked if he has any regrets in his life so far, he answered, "I have a couple of regrets. I'm not going to tell you any of them. You always regret if you're part of something and somebody gets hurt."

Sean Combs

The guy with the ever-changing monikers—Diddy, P Diddy, Puff, Puff Daddy, Puffy—disclosed a defining moment that shaped his life. "When I was 11, I asked my mother if she could buy me a pair of sneakers," said the star of a TV adaptation of the play "A Raisin in the Sun" (he gave by the Sean Combs name as an actor). "I knew it sounds simple but she just didn't have the money. The look I saw on her face really hurt me because she was embarrassed she didn't have the money. From that day I was like, 'I don't want to see that look on her face ever again.' My first big job was to deliver newspapers. It was my dream to be able to buy my mother something or to help out with the bills."

But as a grown-up, Sean realized something else. "After losing my father and three of my best friends to gun violence, I realized I had money but I didn't have anything. I had these people around me and they just disappeared. I was very depressed and upset. I was crying all the time. I got caught up in money. That woke me up and taught me a lesson."

Russell Brand

Russell who? He is dubbed the zaniest man to show his in the UK. He's famous in his country as a stand-up comic, newspaper columnist, television and radio host and book author. He almost stole "Forgetting Sarah Marshall," his US film debut.

The messy-haired wit said things like, "Daniel Craig is a challenge to my heterosexuality. If I knew I was about to die, I'd be out there chatting up Daniel Craig. I'm going to give him such a big cuddle, that man. I could be a vicious Bond girl!"

Russell, asked how he felt about being away from London while he shot "Forgetting...," in Hawaii, quipped, "What I felt was being tantalized sexually by my own countrymen and a sudden sense of bereavement for the lack of sexual opportunities. You're denied exposure to a challenge but still sends it to appear in this fantastic film..."

On how he and Kristen Bell prepared for their academic sex scenes: "We obviously had to familiarize ourselves with each other on account of the intimacy of those scenes. While people in London seemed very excited about the opportunity I was afforded—being in such proximity to a beautiful actress like Kristen

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